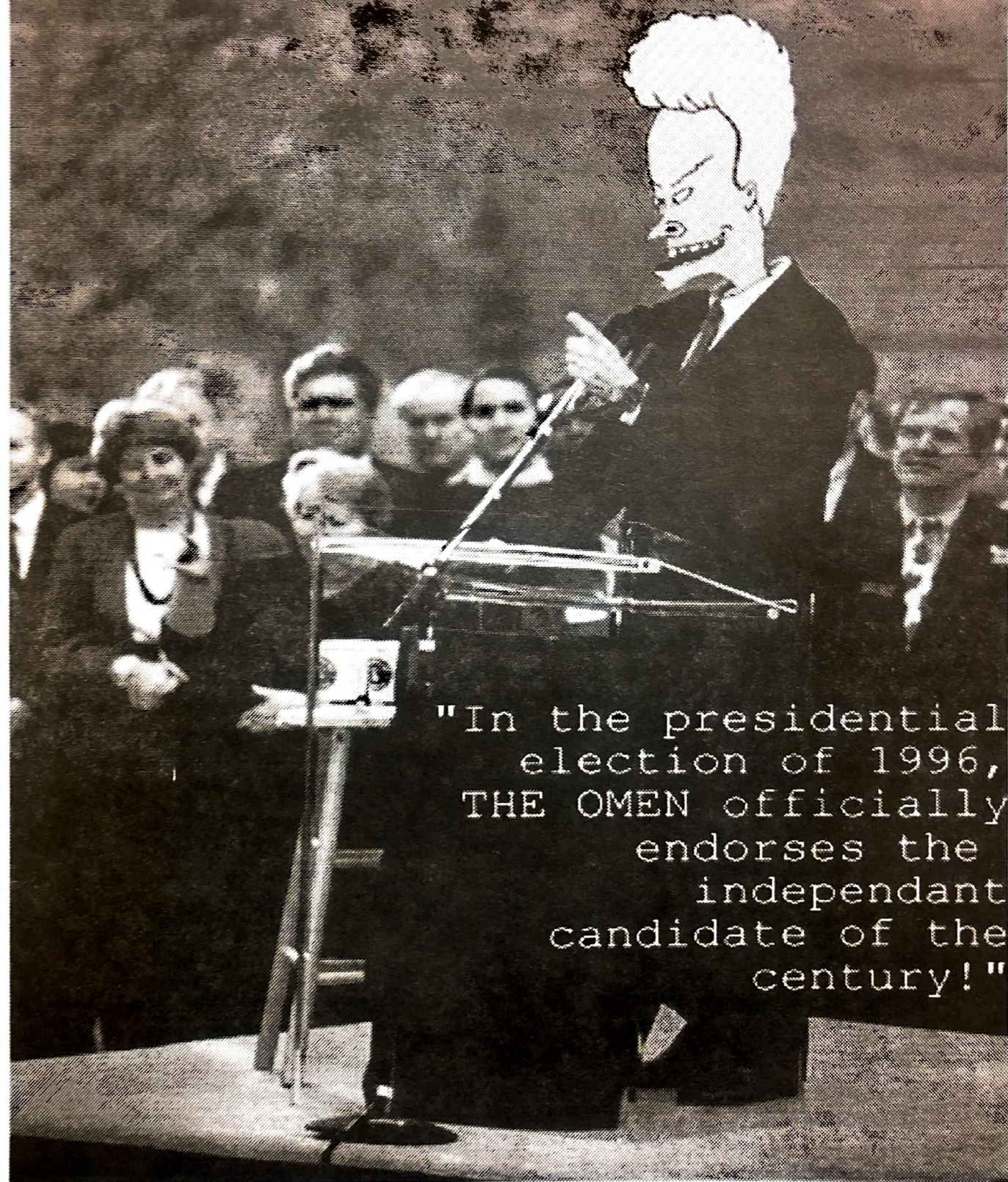


THE OMEN

-dateline, New Hampshire



"In the presidential
election of 1996,
THE OMEN officially
endorses the
independant
candidate of the
century!"

The Omen

Volume 7, Number 4

February 23, 1996

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Policy Box!

The Omen accepts from any member of the Hampshire community. We will not edit anything you write, as long as you are willing to be responsible for what you say. Libel, which we personally find amusing and entertaining for countless hours, is just not able to be printed in this forum.

Submissions, which includes just about anything involving the Hampshire community in some way (news, opinions, artwork, etc.), are due on Saturday nights at 8:00 to the editor of the section in which you wish to appear, or to Ben Sanders (E-307, box 710), or Jonathan Land (E-311, box 527). We prefer submissions on disk (IBM or HIGH DENSITY Macintosh), although hard copy (on paper, dumbass) is okay as well. Label your stuff well and it will make it back to you with no problem.

So give us your news, commentary, short fiction, comics, satire, poetry, art, bulletins, questions, and anything else you can think of, and your beloved community rag will dish it back 700 times. What better way to be heard?

"I'm runnin' the show at 20 below."

-Kurtis Blow

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It Doesn't Have To Be Like This

Has anyone around here noticed that there are no guidebooks for faculty and staff. What I mean is this: There is no written, defined procedure for any department. This is nerve-wracking on three levels: 1) For the people who have to enforce rules which were created seemingly out of thin air; 2) For the other staff and faculty members who have a different set of rules to enforce that sometimes overlap with another department, and thus aren't aware if they should or shouldn't be responsible for it as well; and 3) For the students who are directly affected by this confusion.

For instance: Public Safety will always lock the main dorm doors at night because they know they have to. No one seems to know who unlocks them in the morning. Some Public Safety officers will do it, others think it's House Staff's or Phys. Plant's responsibility. Some Phys. Plant employees will do it, but they think it's House Staff's or Public Safety's responsibility.

You get the point. This is why sometimes the door is unlocked when it should be, and other times it's locked at 2pm on a Wednesday. Another example: The Post Office on Saturday. It was closed at 1pm on a Saturday.

I called a Public Safety officer to let me in (along with the other people waiting). When he arrived, he berated the postal workers for not opening it. The postal workers obviously didn't think it was there job either.

I'm not writing this only to say that everything at Hampshire is sucks, and that this is the perfect opportunity to complain about it. I'm writing this to say that if each head of department (assisted by the department itself) takes the time to think about all the procedures that that department must perform, writes down what they are, and also writes out what the best method(s) of carrying these things out are, there would be very little to no confusion. I know these problems exist from discussing them with a number of staff and faculty members.

There are a large number of employees here at Hampshire that are really good at what they do, but they simply can't perform their jobs properly because of the unintentional bureaucracy created by a lack of a mode of operation.

The interesting thing about this is that it is no one's fault. When the school started, the people involved didn't want to make these types of rules right

away, so they thought that they would get around to it. Hampshire's about education after all, not who gets called should the plumbing fail. Well, it's 25 years later, and no one seems to have gotten around to it yet.

If there were some sort of guidebook for each entity, things would run a lot more smoothly, quickly and happily.

If this seems like a good idea to anyone else who either works at or goes to Hampshire, feel free to contact me (jblf93@hamp.hampshire.edu, x5236, or box 527), and we can try to work on something. I don't feel I've expressed myself entirely clearly here, so if you have any questions, feel free to ask.

Jonathan Land
Managing Editor
The Omen

*Amber Cortes with a Soldering Iron
Lodged Into Her Head*
Jonathan Land,
1996





Guess What? More CRB!

A lot has been written in the Omen recently about the Community Review Board's verdict on those responsible for the 2nd series of chalkings of last Spring.

The Community Review Board's decision (sanctions in the form of an apology and a bibliography on the subject of rape) does not appear to have been greeted with much acclaim. "All Around Involved Community Member/Chalker" Stephanie Cole called the board's conduct "a mockery of all that purports to be fair." Section Hate Editor Josh Brassard suggested the verdict came about as a result of the practice of "bleeding-heart liberalism" by "rich white fucks." The Managing Editor Jonathon Land insisted the Omen would not comply with the verdict, as it would force publication of "insincere" submissions, which is inconsistent with a newly expressed "editorial stand" he has felt it necessary to express.

These responses are not surprising. That the Omen would choose to publish Stephanie Cole's somewhat ponderous and legalistic account of the mishandling of the case by administrators is not surprising. Stephanie Cole is a member of the editorial staff. That Brassard would add a simplistic and rabid denuncia-

tion of the verdict is not surprising. It seems right that Land would object to what he correctly perceives as a usurpation of authority. Those are proper postures for journalists.

And they all raise excellent issues! Cole indicates several fairly serious lapses in the administration's performance. If her account is accurate, the chalkers have been denied efficient due process, which would tarnish the verdict badly. Brassard appropriately calls attention to the fact the verdict seems to be dictating values and limiting the scope of freedom of expression. Land likewise emphasizes 1st amendment issues, a disturbing interference with free press.

No one, it seems, is happy. Particularly Josh Brassard; his history of the chalkings accepts of almost no defense for the verdict. And yet, even with all the points raised, I know, and perhaps you know, that the issue is complicated, much more complicated than that!

I am not personally a journalist or a chalker. However, it is only fair to betray to you some of what I am, as I did those of others above, so that you make take what I say with salt and not as gospel (if you are a Hampshire student, you are probably compelled to question everything,

anyway). So, what I am is a sometime social scientist fascinated by this story and its issues. I have, at various times, decided in favor of both the 1st chalkers, and the 2nd chalkers (but never the administration). I am also, I should not neglect to say, a sensitive white liberal, and I do, on occasion, both snivel and preach. I voted for Clinton; there didn't seem like anything else to do.

But that should suffice. The service I can offer here is not to talk about myself, but to tell the story of the chalkers in more detail than I believe has previously been written. I have followed it all along; I was there at the beginning. . .

Ten months ago activists concerned with sexual abuse covered the Hampshire campus with chalkings. The campus was swamped with literature, some very loaded, almost propagandistic, some very informative. The campaign included 20 'fact' sheets, according to a quoted survey. examples: "1 in 6 men sexually are abused during their lifetime", "1 in 3 women raped", "87% of rapes are planned", "1% of Hampshire men said on a survey that no was interpretable as consent, this is 1% too much!" Chalking was a part of the pro-

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REMEMBER FPH 107!

Continued from previous page
gram; "Are you a rapist?" outside FPH; elsewhere, "How dare you touch her, you bastard!"; and in front of the library, a body outlined in chalk on the ground-"assaulted" written on it; hung from a dorm balcony, a banner reading "rape one woman, rape all women".

My reaction to these was, at first, interest, and later, mild irritation. They were everywhere, and some seemed to use very loaded language. Other people I spoke to were put off by the "preachy" tone of the chalkings. Outside of FPH, I overheard, "Are you a Rapist? That's a little strong, isn't it?" I was only mildly bothered by the chalkings because I appreciated what they were trying to do. But I noticed that they didn't seem to be having the desired effect.

Not long after, other chalkings appeared. They included: a body in pieces-"disembodied" written on it; another with "eaten by vegans"; elsewhere "1 in 3 women enjoy being raped,"; in another location, "rape one woman, rape all womenkind-what a bargain.", and others. I heard about them secondhand, and was disturbed by their message.

A few weeks later, the story came out that the 2nd chalkings were by Hampshire students. A friend of mine said, ironically, "Only at Hampshire would people speak out against speaking out." There was a forum held, with both groups

present, to discuss what had happened. Positively shocked that students were responsible, I decided to attend.

The discussion at the forum is worthy of several articles by itself. Expecting to find the 2nd group in an indefensible position and sensing a chance to express indignation, I was very surprised when a woman (who emphasized that she did not speak for anyone but herself) eloquently and cogently explained her reasons for doing some of the "offensive" chalkings. I had not expected to be impressed and learned her name was Stephanie Cole.

She explained, in a prepared statement, that the chalkings were not done by an organized group, rather by individuals were shared similar feelings about the first chalkings work. As it came out in the discussion, they had various motives. None advocated rape; more than one was female. Generally their concern was the issue of free speech. Some felt that the issue of rape had become a "sacred cow", had passed beyond discussion. Some felt that the graffiti was accusatory and/or antilegal. One woman particularly did not like the 'womenkind' chalking; she felt that she was being spoken for as a woman and denied her own voice. They were bothered by the anonymity of the chalkings, which relieves the chalkers of responsibility for their work. One said he thought women exagger-

ated the danger of walking alone at night.

The 1st chalkers were more numerous (students from all 5 colleges), less skilled in elocution, but still emotionally convincing. They spoke of empowerment. They seemed honestly concerned with the issue of rape and were baffled that anyone took issue with their work. Only at Hampshire, they said, had there been such a backlash.

People who attended took different sides. Most ironic was a sentiment expressed individually by several people. "When I saw the first chalkings, I thought, 'oh yeah, they're right. But is this necessary at Hampshire where the incidence of rape is so low, or are they just overly aggressive feminists?' and then, when I saw the second chalkings he thought, "Wow, I guess it really was necessary." Paradoxically, the more offensive chalkings created more sympathy for the issue of sexual abuse!

This reminded me of the incident at Oberlin College, in my home town. In 1990, a banner reading "White Supremacy" was put up in the middle of campus, and "kill all the niggers" was written on a bathroom wall. The Oberlin community talked about nothing but racism for several weeks. It seems human nature is not a little perverse.

When I left the forum, I felt exalted by the confusing richness of the issues. I was no

Continued on next page

What Is This, Someone Cares?

Continued from previous page

longer sure I could condemn anyone! Everyone seemed to have acted on mostly admirable, heartfelt motives. Thinking to myself and talking to friends afterwards, I reached the following conclusions, which may be of interest to those concerned about rape or activism generally (these are only my own opinions):

There are two, equally important tasks facing antirape activists: to foster an atmosphere that is unsupportive of rape, and also to teach women to resist rape when it is attempted. This amounts to attacking the two parts of a rape, the rapist (trying to prevent rape by having a social environment that produces less of them), and the victim (stopping rapes in their tracks by making women ready aggressively prepared to defend themselves). The two measures may be connected; making the world more supportive of antirape sentiment may help women to feel empowered enough to fight back.

The 1st chalkers were not adept at achieving either of these goals. Their message was generally intended towards the 2nd goal, making women strong to resist. Yet they did it indirectly, by expressing rage at the rapist and hoping to stimulate the same rage in those who read their graffiti. This was too subtle for many, who felt they were being preached to in an accusatory tone. It is possible that they were actually addressing rapists, in

which case their chalkings amounted to mere name-calling.

The tactic of the 2nd chalkers, though intended as satire of the 1st, was more effective at eliciting sympathy! Its irony was, amazingly, too subtle for most. Mistaken for sexist graffiti, it stimulated the opposite of what it seemed to say. It is effective, but also manipulative. It depends on deceiving the reader to get across its message.

A better alternative would need to be as effective as the 2nd chalkings, yet direct, as neither chalkings were. It would need to be clear in who it addressed and what it intended. And it would not be mere name-calling. Empower-*ing* activity is necessary to raise consciousness among activists. Name calling is empower-*ing*. But when stepping into the public arena and preaching to the unconverted, it is better to be empower-*ed*. That is, already empowered. It is important to state your case forcefully but reservedly; it is a way of speaking from strength, very impressive, assured. This is the way to reach new people.

So that completes the history (and my opinions, for now). Now, the questions: Did the 2nd chalkers do anything that "violated community norms", or that should require apology or amendment? Or were they merely guilty of insensitivity, on their way to defending free speech? It is true that people

were offended. Was that their own fault, or the 2nd chalkers' fault? And should the community demand a "sorry"?

The question is especially interesting to me because I have been selected (randomly, as it is done) to serve, this semester, on the Community Review Board of Hampshire College. So perhaps my opinion is not merely my opinion, at last! I will close with these words:

This is what I think: This is not purely a first amendment issue. All of the graffiti in question was on private property, not in the press. It is therefore subject to rules of the institution which may be more strict than anything goes. Even if it were simply speech (as in a person standing publicly and shouting the phrases of the 2nd chalkings, "Rape one woman-rape all womankind. What a bargain!"), if it could be proven that the speech was directed to one particular individual or group of individuals, *and* if it were found to be aggressive or hostile, then what appeared to be speech is not merely speech but also harassment (remember, there's a pretty good reason you can be arrested for flicking off a police officer). If all this is so, perhaps they should read a little about rape victims. Still, there are a lot of ifs. I am not convinced of any of this. But, if Stephanie Cole and the other 2nd chalkers are guilty of this, they are also responsible

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SECTION HATE

Mmm.... RAW Meat

When the posters went up soliciting submissions to RAW (Race and Women), I was intrigued to the point of wishing I could write for the journal. Unfortunately, a principle I consider fundamental to my identity would have been compromised by being published in RAW; men were not offered a voice in this publication. I do not deny the validity of offering a forum for women in what is essentially still a "man's world." I prefer, however, to alter the parameters of our society *mano e mano*. Separatism plays a valuable role in our society, but is a game I cannot convince myself to play.

Hence, I would like to go out on a more personal limb than usual, and publish in The Omen the commentary I could not put in RAW. I hope my participation in The Omen's Round Table Discussion of RAW does not detract from this article. The few anecdotes I have to offer, and some thoughts regarding race (inevitably couched in my study of Constitutional law), have merit only on a personal level—but when you boil it down, the personal is political, and the generalities we analyze "race problems" with are merely convenient ways to study such situations without being

overwhelmed with the myriad individuals that compose them.

My native Utica, NY is a vast polyglot, mostly run by Italians, populated by blacks and whites, and pocketed with enclaves of Russian, Latino, and fresh-off-the-boat European, and Chinese, and Korean immigrants. If this picture I paint gives immediate pause to the reader, it is no wonder—we all perceive race, and the society it creates, from our own, tiny perspective. The "racist" attitudes I possess, or have witnessed, are formed by "My Town." And the fact of the matter is, the Mob runs my town. While the city has changed somewhat over the last few years, I grew up in an area where Italians were "the Establishment," "The Man," and "Boss Charlie." Common adversity brings people together, and aside from the Knights of Columbus, the rest of the Utica population often got along remarkably well, united against a "common foe." In a word, this is sick. From a certain point of view, it was also true. I remember reading once about a racist experience someone had at Hampshire: a fellow student said to them "Oh, you're Hispanic? That's great—my Hispanic maid cleans

really well," (I still have the article, if anyone is interested). In Utica, the equivalent is "Well, they make good pizza."

And it's so racist that I said that! But it's impossible to completely sterilize the realities we live with. Italians hold a lot of the cards in Utica, and bitter stereotyping is the way people get even. Never mind that Italians came to Utica to flee racism in New York City, carved out there own space, and waxed successful there. People only live in their immediate environment.

This aside, it would be a gross oversimplification on my part (which is all commentary of this sort can ever be) to convey to my readers that life inside the non-Italian bubble of solidarity in my town was a nirvana of racial good will. People, by virtue of being people, will just never get along. It's one of the more fun aspects of being human, the conflict that breeds identity. Race just makes it easier for people to construct reasons why they can't see eye to eye. And so, the whites fought with the blacks, those who spoke English were bastards to those who

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More on RAW

Continued from previous page

didn't, anyone who found a difference of opinion with their fellow man used their heritage to exacerbate it, and my Mom and I fought when I wore too much eye shadow. Life is rough.

Defeatist? Never. We can overcome the "race problem." Slings and arrows derived from non-deterministic qualities can be abrogated. Then we can fight about things worthy of debate: the environment, the capitalist system, and how annoying Jerry Seinfeld really is.

Speaking of Seinfeld, an interesting racial situation in my life, which I have always found rather bizarre, is the habit people have of assuming I'm a Jew. Which is intriguing, since I'm Anglo-Saxon, and Mohawk. The last incident of this was at Amherst, when my favorite professor, whom I'd been with for two semesters, expressed shock upon finding out I was raised in the Episcopal Church. Now, it's difficult to speculate why people think I'm Jewish, without going into stereotype mode, but at least I can question the wisdom of these assumptions based on my name. "Stephanie Cole." What the heck? It sounds like I should be sipping tea at a bloody cricket match, or at the very least, having "jollie owld daey" with Mary Poppins. However, since the majority of people who make this assumption are Jewish, I take it as a compliment (the next ques-

tion of course being: Why wouldn't it be a compliment if a *goyim* assumed I was a Jew? Because when a Jew thinks I'm one of the tribe, it's like being invited to their place for dinner. They want me as one of the family. Otherwise, it's just an unfounded assumption, and sort of a neutral untruth.).

As to being a chick, and possessed of a certain heritage: My People Wore Corsets. Having tried the things a couple times, I can see the attraction. Having a tit-shelf to put your

Campus Cop Log

[Editor's note: This is the first time we're running a police log. They are listed as follows: event-day-time-CFS card number-location-comment. If there are any comments on format or such, we're open to them. Now onto Hampshire's Most Wanted.]

Admits: *[Do you feel dumb if you get locked out of your room? Well, you're in good company.]*

Monday February 12, 1996:

24:00 CFS 96-413 Enfield. Student let into room.

00:04 CFS 96-414 Greenwich. Student let into room.

22:36 CFS 96-425 Green-

Continued on next page

crummet on is sort of handy. In these modern times, I use the cleavage created by my sports bra to store window putty in during my summer employ as a foreman with College Pro Painters. Genetic habits die hard (actually, that a facetious lie—I just used it to unsettle the men I had to boss around. Worked, too.).

There's a lot more, but fuck it for now. "All men are created equal." Thomas Jefferson wrote that, and later commented that while it was a nearly impossible axiom to be faithful to, it was "a standard perhaps never to be attained, but to be forever struggled for." They may have been the ruling class, folks, but they set the stage for us. Dopey, naive, but true. And good luck.

Stephanie Cole
The Hampshire Omen

CRB Ends

Continued from page 7

for stimulating much needed discussion of important issues, as the Board acknowledged. If they are penalized, then they should also be rewarded. I feel this most strongly. Perhaps an extra evaluation for their portfolios. Gift certificate for ACLU membership.

The rewarding lesson of this story, I think, is that truth is not simple.

And that is all I wanted to say.

Josh Henle

Who Knew This Much Went On?

Continued from previous page

wich. Student let in.

Tuesday February 13, 1996:

17:30 CFS 96-432 Library. Student let into office.

20:30 CFS 96-436 Dining Commons. Employee let in.

Wednesday February 14, 1996:

00:58 CFS 96-439 Greenwich. Student let in.

09:07 CFS 96-440 Library. Student let into office.

16:45 CFS 96-450 Library. Student let into office.

19:26 CFS 96-454 Blair Hall. Professor let in.

20:01 CFS 96-456 Dining Commons. Student let in to retrieve property.

Thursday February 15, 1996:

00:19 CFS 96-459 Prescott. Student let in.

Saturday February 17, 1996:

01:31 CFS 96-477 Prescott. Student let in.

14:21 CFS 96-479 Cole Science. Student let in.

Sunday February 18, 1996:

18:03 CFS 96-483 Library. Student let into office.

Disturbances: *[Disturbances? I'll show you disturbances.]*

Friday February 16, 1996:

01:12 CFS 96-464 Prescott. Noise complaint re 98 - radio turned down.

Saturday February 17, 1996:

01:32 CFS 96-478 Enfield. Band stopped playing upon re-

quest.

Escorts: *[No, not that kind, you deadbeat.]*

Tuesday February 13, 1996:

20:10 CFS 96-435 Women's Center. Student escorted to Dakin.

Thursday February 15, 1996:

23:11 CFS 96-463 Merrill. Student escorted to Prescott.

Sunday February 18, 1996:

19:09 CFS 96-484 Prescott. Student escorted to Enfield.

FIRE!!!!!!: *[Ahhh, paydirt!]*

Thursday February 15, 1996:

22:22 CFS 96-462 Enfield. Unfounded - cookout in 43.

FIRE ALARMS!!!!: *[Annoying, but an acceptable social event.]*

Monday February 12, 1996:

18:35 CFS 96-420 Greenwich. Cooking smoke in apartment 21.

Sunday February 18, 1996:

17:08 CFS 96-482 Greenwich. Cigarette smoke.

Maintenance Matters: *[Boring, but necessary.]*

Monday February 12, 1996:

23:00 CFS 96-426 Enfield. Electrical problem - Physical Plant notified.

Tuesday February 13, 1996:

16:40 CFS 96-429 Prescott. Heat problem - Physical Plant advised.

17:28 CFS 96-431 Greenwich. Heat problem - Physical Plant advised.

21:00 CFS 96-437 Prescott. Plumbing problem - Physical Plant advised.

Wednesday February 14, 1996:

17:20 CFS 96-451 Merrill. Lock problem - Physical Plant advised.

20:00 CFS 96-455 Blair Hall. Heat problem - Physical Plant advised.

Saturday February 17, 1996:

18:14 CFS 96-437 Film and Photo. Plumbing problem - Physical Plant notified.

Medical Transports: *[This list leads me to believe Prescott is a den o' illness.]*

Monday February 12, 1996:

08:51 CFS 96-415 Health Services. Student transported to Merrill.

14:16 CFS 96-418 Library. Student transported to Prescott.

17:50 CFS 96-419 Prescott. Student transported to Library.

Tuesday February 13, 1996:

12:18 CFS 96-427 Prescott. Student transported to Library.

15:34 CFS 96-428 Library. Student transported to Prescott.

Wednesday February 14, 1996:

09:58 CFS 96-441 Dakin. Student transported to EDH.

10:09 CFS 96-442 Prescott. Student transported to FPH.

10:59 CFS 96-446 Health

Continued on the next page.

More On RAW

Welcome to "The Control Panel," a weekly chat in which a bunch of people talk about something they aren't necessarily qualified to talk about. Still beats most of the regular columnists. Tonight's topic is RAW, Race and Women, the publication.

If you would like to suggest a topic or be on the panel, please let The Omen know through the usual channels.

The panel this evening consists of Stephanie Cole, a fifth-year law student, Damien Weaver, a second-year ...um, student, Jesse Recinos, a second-year student of Judezmo studies, Aaron Mulvaney, a music concentrator who studied Jewish history for a year and a half, and Keith Adams, a first-year jazz performance concentrator at Brown University.

D: Let's start with an opening comment from each of us: I'd like to say that the blue laws in Massachusetts are absurd. I'd furthermore like to say that I am excited to learn that my friend Jesse is a Judezmo.

J: I was also excited to learn that I was a Judezmo, and the banana creme pie at dinner sucked.

K: I would like to express in the strongest possible terms my horror that no-one has come up with a word for someone who is half-latino and half slavick.

(crowd): Slovo-rican? Czecksican? Slavino?

S: I am dismayed to learn that passion passes so easily for legitimate social commentary: I'm a chick, and I can use statistics.

K: And cite them, too.

J: I'm just glad to see there's another forum for victims at Hampshire College.

D: I find it interesting, as Steph mentioned earlier, that in a journal about women and race the only two real essays were by an asian-american and a jew.

S: In addition, I find it interesting that, in a magazine that purports to take some social risks, no-one had the chutzpah to survey women of color on campus and ask why they weren't interested in writing for this forum (and if this option was abandoned from fear of "offending" people, why wasn't the whole issue regarded as offensive?).

K: Well, this is probably due at least in part to the fact that this is just a collection of essays, and that there isn't any central journalistic force to go out and survey, or fact check, or interview.

D: Is that so?

J: It's nice, though, and re-

freshing, to see that people from other than the three main minority camps, say, jews, who are white, can talk about issues of race and not get, um, in trouble.

K: When talking about these pieces, keep in mind how poorly they'd apply to people of mixed-race, as most treatments of race do.

S: Despite the fact that the publication of "raw" material is the object of the magazine, it irks me that such an important topic such as this is covered with generally poor attention to textual niceties, such as grammar... it insults the material that they can't take what they're saying seriously enough even to proofread it.

A: It bothers me that people are allowed to be proud of their heritage if they're from, say, Africa, and I know I'm going to get in trouble for saying this, but why are people who are proud of their white heritage called racists? People who want to celebrate their history as whites?

D: I honestly believe that the white race is a fallacy, Aaron. When we say "white," all we mean is "not a member of one of a group of largely non-european cultures." I believe "white pride" is inherently racist.

A: But what about being proud of your german or Irish

Continued on next page

Even More on RAW

Continued from previous page

ancestry? It's not like someone who does that is denying the validity of other ancestries.

D: Join a German or Irish pride group. I'm embarrassed by being mostly Scots, myself. My cultural ancestors, largely, are people who I hate and who would have hated me. The last time I saw Scottish pride in this country was in the southern slave-owners. Repulsive. I find strength in aspects of my identity unaffiliated with my racial history.

A: I know I'm in dangerous territory, but German or Irish or Polish history is not given the same legitimacy. Signs like "Irish need not apply" don't matter, because we aren't "people of color," but Irish- or Italian-Americans still have experienced discrimination. They've taken it on the chin in the past.

K: They aren't taking it on the chin today, though. They have in the past, and anyone who says otherwise is wrong, but there are people who are still taking it on the chin today, and that's more immediate.

A: I'm not disputing that. I just want to say that not all "whites" are descended from slave-owners.

J: It seems like everyone is scrambling to be non-white,

looking for oppressive histories and ethnicities.

D: I think, though, that people getting more specific, and thus accurate about their races, say, calling themselves greek-americans, is a good thing, because as the first article said, she was tired of people calling themselves "asian-americans" rather than chinese-americans or cambodian-americans. It's not just a search for credentials... it's a dismantling of lies like "the white race" or "the asian race."

K: African-Americans, it seems, are largely denied that kind of thing, because of having been torn from their homeland five hundred years ago... often the threads are too convoluted to trace back to a certain nation.

D: Which leads, lamentably, to Africa being considered by some to be a big homogenous continent, which it was no more than Europe or Asia.

(we are kicked out of the lounge by TV junkies; Keith, Steph and myself reconvening in Steph's room)

D: What a repulsive habit. TV addiction is a scourge.

S: You watch C-Span and Monday Night Raw, you hypocrite.

D: Until they pulled the USA Network, damn them. Razor Ramon, we hardly knew ye.

K: People's identification- Discussing race in the context of racial discrimination and oppression, it's important to note that people discriminate on things other than the basis of color. Language, for instance, is hugely important. Immigrants aside, even speaking the wrong dialect of American English is an issue. If you SOUND black or southern or northern, that can be more important than what you look like.

D: It's not too hard to wear the correct clothes, but it's more difficult to talk the correct speech.

S: There is a common tongue, here in America, that is thought of as "the right way to speak," and it happens to be a white way of speaking.

D: I don't think it "just happens" to be.

S: Well, let's just say you get to pick the accent if you dominate the nation.

K: Everyone wants to hear a white midwesterner. The insistence in first article that it be about color is offensive, as is the surity with which she engages in finger-pointing.

D: She's writing for a white

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How Much is There to Say?

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audience. Like the fact that "white talk" is the standard, it's part of whiteness being normative. Subtle, but important. That whole thing of describing a stranger... do you mention her race if he's mixed-european, or only if he's non-white?

K: The feeling I got from everything in my first taste of RAW was that there would be no apologies made for lack of fact-checking. There would be no apologies for feet stepped on, no apologies for lack of statistics. It had nothing more to say than "We're mad as hell," and I question how useful or constructive such a publication is.

D: Well, it got us talking about race, and although I don't know how much good that does anyone else, it's instructive for us.

K: It got us talking about race, but so would a lynching, and RAW as a publication seems to aspire to more, namely, to be a source of productive dialogue.

S: Women feel that they have to exclude men from the forum to be able to discuss issues of Race and Women in a powerful manner, and consolidate the agenda, and I feel that the inclusion of men's writing would have in no way detracted from the publication.

D: There are a lot of politics in a decision like that. Gender escapism.

K: There is a moral surity that caricaturing the gay communities (as in the Women and AIDS piece) or treating the sufferings and work of a black poetess as if they were comorable to one's own could never offend because the authors are themselves oppressed.

D: I can't see RAW getting a CRB, no, but part of that presumption is due, I feel, to the post-modernist ideas about everyone's every idea being somehow karmically equatable with everyone else's. But, it does turn my stomach.

S: Unfortunately, it is impossible to separate the messenger from the message. Any commentary on race issues is delivered by someone who is himself possessed of a racial identity—often, a suspect one. The debate on race often degenerates into a Catch 22; we cannot divorce ourselves from these issues, but the exigent circumstances around such commentary often loads them with other meaning, making it difficult for the debate to occur on anything other than moral highground.

D: You said a mouthful... It's often difficult to criticize the idea without criticizing the identity of the person writing the idea,

which ambiguity I resent but accept. I have a terrible fear that someday I'll actually meet bell hooks and she'll dislike me, and I will have to reconcile the fact that she thinks I suck with my immense respect for her work, which is in many ways a respect for who she is

K: In response to Stephanie, when viewed in terms of the moral highground, R.A.W. breaks down fairly obviously, and along lines similar to most treatments (purportedly journalistic or not) of discrimination in the United States. In many discussions of this nature, the entire exchange is a fierce territorial squabble for the moral highground. Anybody capable of identifying as a group which has at any point in time or space been oppressed does so, and folds his arms righteously. Those unable to do so (in these debates usually males of the upper class and Anglo-Saxon descent) try to explain that all this happened a long time ago, and besides, they have never oppressed anybody. The sole deviation from this line of discussion was the article about including minorities in the Women's Center.

S: From that point, is also very easy to fall prey to the self-defense mechanism of saying "Why do we need to be ashamed of our tradition of success in a world of Social Darwinism?" The fat white men Keith refers

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It Keeps Going

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to have been driven into a corner; having attended the moral lowground, they cling to it with pride. This is a large part of the problem with the "race" debate; the habit of blaming people who have benefitted from the system alienates them. Part of me then thinks: Oh, well, the poor fat white guy. But the fact of the matter is, we can never solve this problem when the debate takes the tone of finger-pointing. It is not the responsibility to the oppressed, there is no moral obligation, to placate the "majority." Unfortunately, this may be a vital part of changing the status quo.

D: The fat white man's been driven into a corner? Bullshit. The fat white man still by and large doesn't care about issues of race. He doesn't need moral high ground, he owns the forum. I have no doubt whatsoever that if any real progress was made in this nation's racial-cultural inequities a whole lot of people would end up dead at the government's hands, if that's what it took to keep the fat white man's daughter from marrying outside her race. I hate to say it, but it seems to me that one of the best things we, as humanists, can do, is to work on the education system while we wait for all the old people to die. Agism, sure, but I think prejudice, or a sense of human equality, is instilled largely while we are very young. Work-

ing with the young is my idea for how we can make America a less racist place.

K: I don't think Stephanie necessarily meant to suggest that the FWM's have been driven into a corner. She is simply acknowledging the reality that true progress is impossible without their participation. There are simply too many whites and too many males for any serious attempt at social reform to have the luxury of offending all of them. And while I agree that the young are more impressionable than the old, we do not have the ability to lock these young people away from the racist influences which you seek to isolate them from—that is to say, that while we're waiting for the old to die, they might be telling our impressionable youth that women shouldn't vote and that black men can't quarterback worth a damn.

S: Right on, Keith. And not to beat a dead horse, but I would like to draw something else from this "FWM" commentary—the bifurcation of this debate from the so-called "real world." People with the clout in society approach this debate with some of that clout stripped from them, vis-a-vis moral credentials in the debate. From this, I find an interesting discrepancy between the debate and the society it purports to analyze. But maybe we should chat about the works in RAW specifically, boys.

D: Hell with RAW. I want to talk about class, and how that relates to race. This is more important than that rag. What Aaron said a while back about Irish, etcetera being discriminated against: That was on the basis of class, largely. Their ethnicity provided a great handle on the fact that the Irish immigrants were lower-class. I believe that classism is a large part of the foundation of American white racism, but that racism has since grown larger and "become" its own issue. This ties into what Stephanie was saying about this debate in the real world, and my talk about ignorance... any talk about ignorance becomes talk about education, and thus a talk about class. Not to meta-argue (damn those post-modern hyphens), but it is exactly my awareness of how little most of America cares for what we or anyone else here in the ivory tower (racist imagery) say that makes me advocate a concentration on a left-wing reclamation of our nation's schoolboards, wresting them from the hands of the creationist, christian racists while at least (a nod to Keith) trying to keep the ignorant folks from damaging them too much. Sorry to rant... yes, let's address RAW from now on, definitely. My last thing I want to say is that the Bible is racist and a christian society will never be anything but.

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The End of RAW

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K: While I agree that racism and classism are intimately tied, you're playing fast and loose with history in claiming that racism branched out of classism. Blacks were thought inferior by virtue of their race, not their economic status. Since Damien's calling for a change back to the subject at hand, and since I agree in spades, let's get back to RAW. Specifically, there was one article that bothered me deeply, and we haven't really touched on it yet. I am referring to Amanda Siegel's piece, the last one in the collection. She makes many valid points about the racial division within the Jewish community, and it was the only piece in the first issue of RAW which informed me particularly. What I found ques-

tionable was her ongoing fixation with her "struggle." She clearly feels that as an American Jew, she is oppressed; she refers to Israel as "a place where I won't have to be paranoid, worrying if people know that I'm Jewish." The most obvious interpretation of this dubious fragment is that she feels that she is profoundly oppressed as a Jew in the United States, and that fear that others will learn of her race she will be put in peril. I gently suggest that in the United States, this is an anachronism. Perhaps I am wrong, but I do not see the same sort of widespread fear, mistrust and hatred directed at Jews as is directed against migrant farmworkers. The other obvious interpretation is that she is protesting the normalization of

gentilehood in the United States; that is, she is tired of having everyone assume that she is other than Jewish. But if she goes to Israel where everyone will assume that she is Jewish, is she not engaging in the same normalization that Christians in the United States are guilty of? As an outspoken atheist, I am very aware of the tacit Christianity of our culture, but I would find tacit Judaism just as dangerous.

D: The laptop's out of power. I guess that's all we have time for this week. Come back next week when a bunch of us talk about another topic on "The Control Panel"

Stephanie Cole, Damien Weaver, Jesse Recinos, Aaron Mulvany, and Keith Adams.

Community Council

As of 1.February. 1996

there are two at-large student seats open for election on Community Council At-large representatives may come from any of the houses or from off-campus. Persons interested in running for election to Council

should contact

Wil Doane
x 4766
Dakin F207
wedS95@hampshire.edu

or any other Council member at
x 3153
Council Office, Airport Lounge
ccouncil@hampshire.edu

BEFORE 23.February. 1996